



## PEOPLE

### **For IDOT's Staff, Professionalism Is the Key to Success**

The Illinois Department of Transportation has a long tradition of professionalism and achievement, and IDOT staff has a lot riding on the successes or failures it either enjoys or endures. At IDOT, staff typically exhibits the kind of personal pride that often spells the positive difference between failure and success. The culture at IDOT insists that failure is not an option, and when the chips are down, staff consistently rises to the occasion.

Never has this attitude been more apparent than in the early 21st century as nationwide budget constraints and increasing demand for accountability have combined to add unprecedented program and service delivery pressures to a rapidly decreasing staff. IDOT has reduced staff numbers by more than 20 percent, more than 1,400 workers, since 2002 while continuing to deliver on its annual program promises.

The Department has worked through staffing concerns to date by focusing on improved process efficiencies, improved program coordination, improved training, improved strategic planning, improved communications, more effective use of outside contractors, improved contract and procurement management, and more.

But mainly, the gains made at IDOT despite continuing budget constraints point directly to the willingness and abilities of key staff to take on additional workloads, learn additional skills, and produce additional value for IDOT's customers – the business and leisure travelers who rely on Illinois' vast array of safe, cost-effective transportation options.

As a result, every single man and woman who proudly exclaims they work for IDOT will tell you that they do much more than their job titles require. This reflects the traditional can-do attitude and staff support that keeps IDOT successful and prepared to deliver needed transportation services. At IDOT, it all starts with a dedicated, knowledgeable and professional staff.

## FISCAL OVERVIEW

The IDOT highway programs are primarily supported by three major revenue sources: two state tax sources and federal aid.

**State Revenues.** One state resource is the Motor Fuel Tax (MFT) with a rate of 19 cents per gallon on motor fuel consumed on the highways plus an additional 2.5 cents per gallon for diesel. The other is motor vehicle registration fees that vary according to vehicle type and weight. The state shares MFT revenue with local governments for use on their road systems, distributing more than 54 percent of net revenue to them. This means about 25 percent of all state source highway revenue is distributed to local governments.

The characteristic common to both major state sources is that the tax base does not grow sufficiently with inflation and has even shrunk at times. Although auto and truck travel have steadily increased, the effect on fuel consumption has been significantly offset by increased fuel efficiency. Since neither the fuel tax nor registration fees are based on price or value, inflation does not cause tax revenues to grow. As a result of these factors, the major revenue sources for highway programs do not grow sufficiently to keep up with inflation-driven costs.

**Federal Revenues.** The third major source is federal aid, supported by the federal Highway Trust Fund (HTF). Although there are several taxes supporting this fund, the main one is the federal motor fuel tax. This tax, like the Illinois tax, is applied in cents per gallon and is subject to the same slow-growing trends. In the past, federal expenditures from the HTF have been artificially constrained in an effort to reduce the federal budget deficit. The current multi-year authorization bill, SAFETEA-LU, is designed to distribute all available money to the states. While the legislation raised federal highway funding to Illinois, the increase still fell far short of the amount needed to keep up with the level of deterioration of Illinois' highways and bridges.

Illinois is one of only a handful of states where motor fuel is subject to the sales tax. Transportation financing legislation in 1979 directed a percentage of sales tax revenue, estimated to be equal to that raised from motor fuel, to highways funding. Legislation enacted in subsequent years gradually reduced the percentage until Illinois FIRST eliminated its use for highway funding in April 2000 pursuant to legislation passed in 1999.

## ROAD FUND, CONSTRUCTION FUND

IDOT has two funds that support most of the highway programs. The Road Fund is the fund that IDOT has used throughout its history to support highway construction, maintenance, and related operations. The

1983 tax increase legislation created the Construction Fund (technically, the State Construction Account Fund) and directed all revenue from the tax increases into that fund. The Construction Fund can only be used for contract construction on the state-maintained system.

## Road Fund

The Road Fund's primary revenues come from motor fuel taxes, motor vehicle registration fees, and federal reimbursement. Other revenue sources include reimbursements from local governments, interest earned on fund balances, and miscellaneous fees. All federal reimbursement is deposited in the Road Fund regardless of the fund in which the reimbursed spending occurred. Any type of spending authorized by IDOT's enabling statutes for highways or its associated support costs can occur in the Road Fund. This includes paying for any construction on the state or local highway system, debt service, IDOT operations, grants and highway safety spending.

## Construction Fund

The Construction Fund's revenues come from motor vehicle registration fees, motor fuel taxes, the diesel differential, and interest earned on fund balances. The diesel differential is an additional 2.5 cent per gallon tax on diesel fuel above the base tax rate. It was imposed in 1983 along with higher registration fees on larger trucks to defray extra costs from allowing 80,000-lb. trucks on Illinois highways. The only type of spending allowed in the Construction Fund is for highway construction on the state highway system. IDOT may not use this fund to pay for a project on the local highway system or any other type of expenditure and cannot use it for debt service on highway bonds, nor contractual or regular Department employees.

## COMBINED ROAD AND CONSTRUCTION FUNDS

The combined Road and Construction Funds make up IDOT's primary fiscal perspective. The combined funds perspective is necessary for financial planning and is what the Comptroller uses when discussing IDOT finances (by referring to the "Road Funds"). However, it is always important to note that the combined funds consist of two separate funds. Each fund requires cash for balances and extra administrative effort.

The combined funds' primary revenue sources are motor fuel taxes, motor vehicle registration fees, and federal reimbursement. Other revenue sources include reimbursements from local governments, interest earned on fund balances, and miscellaneous fees.

Highway construction spending makes up more than half of all spending in the combined funds. Other spending includes the Secretary of State, State Police,

group insurance, grants for highway safety programs, local maintenance agreements, metropolitan planning, and other various items.

## SERIES A BONDS

General Obligation bonds for highways were first authorized by the General Assembly in 1971 under the new state Constitution that eased requirements for bonds. Bond authorizations have been raised five times since then. The last four authorization increases in 1979, 1983, 1989, and 1999 were associated with an increase in revenue supporting state highways. Raising revenues when increasing bond authorizations recognizes that bonds are not free cash and that revenues must be provided for repayment and interest.

There are two main reasons for the use of bond financing. One is to reduce construction costs of a project by building now with bonds instead of later as revenues become available but at higher costs from inflation. The other reason is that the costs of long-lived capital projects (in terms of debt service) are more closely matched to benefits of projects over the same period. These advantages must be balanced against the risk of selling so many bonds that debt service becomes such a large proportion of revenues that it adversely impacts operations and current revenue-funded capital programs.

## FUNDING THE HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM

*Four things make IDOT finances unique among state agencies:*

- IDOT prepares a multi-year construction program and updates it annually.
- IDOT's predominant funding comes from special dedicated funds and relatively little comes from General Funds.
- The major part of the budget is capital which is funded primarily by current revenues and relatively little by bonds.
- The majority of construction spending in a given year is from re-appropriations, not new appropriations.

IDOT publishes a multi-year program every spring, updating the prior year's program, deleting the first year and adding a year to the prior year's program. The program consists of a brief description of the projects that IDOT expects to put under contract, i.e. accomplish, during the specified period. Along with many other tasks, a multi-year projection of the supporting funds' fiscal status is necessary to determine the affordable level of the program. An annual program, which is the first year component of the multi-year program, is published once appropriations are approved for the new fiscal year. The entire cost of an annual program is appropriated for the fiscal year.

## Training and Staff Development at IDOT

**The Training and Educational Development Section** provides quality leadership, managerial, technical and human resource training to the employees of IDOT. These services encourage all levels of personnel to improve their interpersonal, leadership, managerial and technical proficiency.

**The Program Development (PD) Technical Training** series expands technical skills needed by employees to perform Phase I and Phase II tasks related to project development and preparation of plans, specifications and estimates (PS&E) for scheduled lettings. Courses cover a broad curriculum of specific technical topics as well as overviews of policies and procedures for developing projects and preparing plans.

### Employee Safety Unit

Occupational Safety Training Programs are for employees who may be exposed to hazards within their job assignments. IDOT employees are trained on various health and safety issues that could affect their lives. Several of the programs are mandated by the U.S. Department of Labor and follow OSHA standards. Land Surveyors, Structural Engineers and Civil Engineers can earn required Professional Development Hours (PDH) for identified seminars.

### Behavioral Risk Unit

The risk unit provides courses designed to train senior management, managers, supervisors and employees to recognize danger signals in order to intervene or seek assistance before problems escalate.

All training courses fully comply with mandatory federal and state educational requirements and incorporate adult education principles and guidelines.

## Training Accomplishments for 2007

### Reinstitution of Operations Training

Operations training of the IDOT Operations Workforce was temporarily suspended from 2003 to 2006 for budgetary reasons. It is back in place to help:

- Improve operational efficiency and corresponding productivity,
- Provide better communications between employees to help ensure a safer work environment, improve employee morale, and ensure compliance with existing policy guidelines.
- Reinforce positive public perception of the capability and efficiency of the IDOT Operations Workforce.

### Additional Training Program for New Supervisors

This new initiative provided six one-day training sessions for approximately 100 new supervisors to learn core skills necessary to be successful in their roles.

### Expanded Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) Training

The IDOT Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) training program is to:

- Develop awareness of the nature of CSS and its benefits to IDOT, FHWA and the communities served;
- Build partnerships and consensus with stakeholders through a constructive, collaborative decision-making process;
- Integrate the CSS process through all phases of a transportation project.

### OSHA 30-Hour Training

This course targets employees who have a supervisory role, or oversee field operations or construction projects, and incorporates an understanding of multiple work-safety topics. Topics covered in this course are specific to job responsibilities of the trainee.





## Illinois Motorist Opinion Survey Results – Summary for 2007

The Illinois Department of Transportation focuses long-term strategic objectives on customer needs and expectations. In addition to project-specific stakeholder meetings, hearings and discussions, IDOT since 2001 has employed several comprehensive customer survey tools designed to measure user satisfaction levels with various transportation services.

One of the most revealing and helpful tools in shaping long-range objectives is the annual Illinois Motorist Opinion Survey, a written questionnaire randomly distributed each year by mail to a random sample of Illinois licensed drivers. The survey is conducted and administered each year on behalf of IDOT by the University of Illinois-Springfield Survey Research Office. The survey is stratified among the nine IDOT regional districts to provide an accurate balance in responses and opinions from motorists throughout the state. The typical response rate for these surveys is from 35 to 40 percent, providing a sample of from 1,200 to 1,500 usable responses each year. The 2007 survey produced a sample of 1,413 responses, resulting in a sampling error of plus or minus 2.6 percent with a 95-percent confidence level. This means that results of this survey sample will be within 2.6 points of actual population characteristics 95 percent of the time.

Each year, the bulk of the survey is focused on static questions within four basic areas of IDOT transportation service – Roadway Maintenance and Traffic Flow; Road Repair and Construction; Traveler Services; and Employee Conduct. Motorists are asked a series of questions for each service area calling for their ratings of IDOT services on a five-point scale: Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor and Very Poor. Responses are then combined and calculated to provide an overall index of satisfaction for analysis, ranging from 1.0 to 5.0. The method also allows responses to be analyzed based on percentages of specific responses received – for instance, the percent of motorists rating a particular service “good” or “excellent.” These responses to repeating questions provide a benchmark from year to year by which to measure changes in overall motorist attitudes.

Each annual survey also includes a short series of questions that change from year to year to provide IDOT information on topical subjects of the moment, such as traffic safety, motorist communications, work-zone issues, user fees, or specific program or project results.

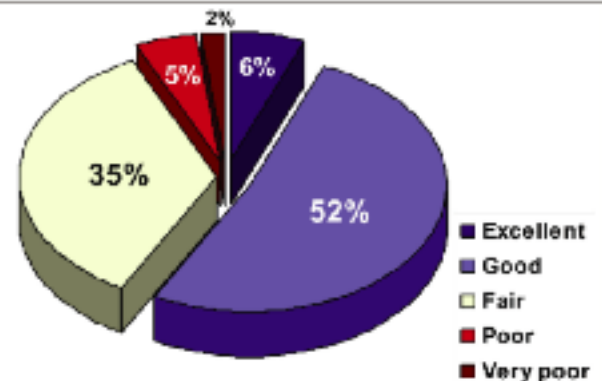
The following is a general summary of results in the four service areas. Readers should keep in mind that, while the survey attempts to describe the differences between state-maintained roads and locally maintained roads, and seeks information and satisfaction levels on

the state-maintained roadway system itself, the results should generally be considered as indicative of satisfaction levels with all roads in Illinois.

Motorist survey results since 2001 show that attitudes and satisfaction levels have remained consistent with few significant statistical fluctuations from year to year.

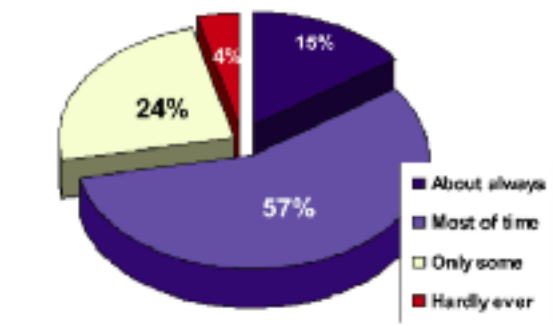
### Motorist Opinion Survey 2007

How Good a Job Is IDOT Doing Overall?

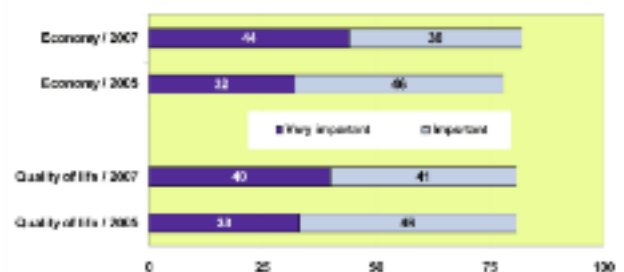


### Motorist Opinion Survey 2007:

How much of the time you trust IDOT to do what is right regarding transportation issues?



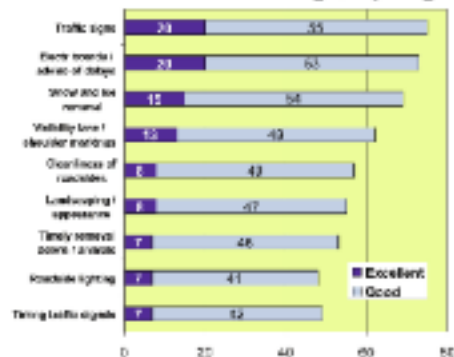
### Assess IDOT's Importance To The Illinois Economy and Overall Quality of Life, 2005 and 2007



## 2007 Illinois Motorist Opinion Survey – Summary of Results

- Overall Job IDOT is Doing: 3.54 out of 5.0, and 58 percent rated “good” or “excellent.”
- How Often You Trust IDOT to Do the Right Thing: 3.81 out of 5.0, and 72 percent rated “just about always” or “most of the time.”

### Maintaining Highways and Traffic Flow: Excellent and Good Ratings, Spring 2007



#### Roadway Maintenance and Traffic Flow (9 aspects surveyed):

- Overall Satisfaction Range: 3.38 to 3.90 out of 5.0.
- Overall Satisfaction Mean for the 9 aspects: 3.61 out of 5.0.
- Highest Rated Services: Traffic signs; Electronic message boards to advise of delays or traffic conditions; Snow and ice control and removal; Visibility of lane and shoulder markings.
- Lowest Rated Services: Roadside lighting and reflectors; Timing of traffic signals; Landscaping and overall appearance, Timely removal of debris from roadways.

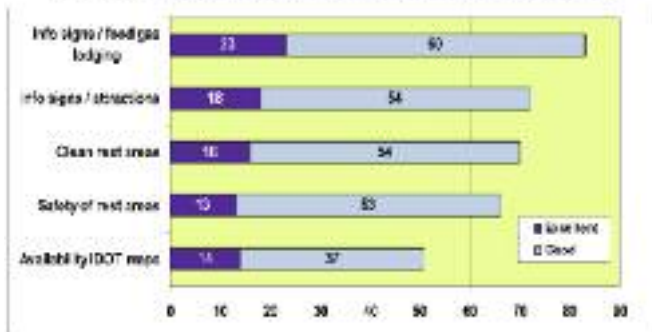
### Road Repair and Construction: Excellent and Good Ratings, Spring 2007



#### Road Repair and Construction (10 aspects surveyed):

- Overall Satisfaction Range: 2.92 to 3.91 out of 5.0.
- Overall Satisfaction Mean for the 10 aspects: 3.30 out of 5.0.
- Highest Rated Services: Warning signs when workers are present; Work zone signs to direct merging traffic and alert motorists to reduce speed; and Advance information about projects.
- Lowest Rated Services: Timeliness of repairs on non-interstates; Ride quality and smoothness on non-interstates; Timeliness of repairs on interstates; and Flow of traffic through work zones.

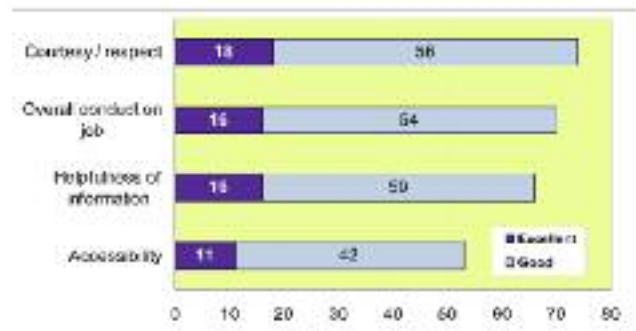
### Traveler Services: Excellent and Good Ratings, Spring 2007



#### Traveler Services (5 aspects surveyed):

- Overall Satisfaction Range: 3.39 to 4.03 out of 5.0.
- Overall Satisfaction Mean for the 5 aspects: 3.75 out of 5.0.
- Highest Rated Services: Informational signs (blue service logo signs) at highway exits for food, gas and lodging; Informational signs (brown informational signs) about area tourist attractions and state parks; Cleanliness and safety of rest areas.
- Lowest Rated Service: Availability of free IDOT road maps.

### Ratings of IDOT Employees: Excellent and Good Ratings, Spring 2007



#### Employee Conduct on the Job (4 aspects surveyed):

- Overall Satisfaction Range: 3.49 to 3.88 out of 5.0.
- Overall Satisfaction Mean for the 4 aspects: 3.73 out of 5.0.
- Highest Rated Aspects: Courtesy and respect shown to motorists; Overall conduct of employees on the job; Helpfulness of information provided by employees.
- Lowest Rated Aspect: Accessibility of employees when you need them.

## Reaching Out to IDOT Customers & Stakeholders Through Context Sensitive Solutions

The Department has continued moving forward with the implementation of CSS during 2007. The year began with national recognition by way of a presentation at the annual meeting of the Transportation Research Board for the Department's CSS implementation. Work continued in the area of policy development, training, communication, and program implementation as outlined on the Department's CSS Balanced Scorecard.

### Policy Development

The Department completed many of the Policy Development tasks established in the Balanced Scorecard during 2007.

- All implementing Divisions and Offices (Highways, Aeronautics, Public and Intermodal Transportation, and Planning) adopted formal procedures for the implementation of CSS. The Bureau of Local Roads also added sections regarding CSS to the Bureau of Local Roads and Streets Manual.
- Summaries of the Bike/Ped and Appurtenances reports were submitted to the Secretary's office for review. A draft revision of Chapter 7 of the BDE manual concerning this subject has been prepared.
- The Department is working with the legislature and the interest groups to determine the impact of Public Act 95-0665 (Complete Streets) on Department activities and on CSS implementation. Complete Streets is one program encompassed by CSS.

During 2008, the Department will pursue the adoption and implementation of the revision to Chapter 7 of the BDE manual regarding bike and pedestrian accommodations. In addition, the Department will continue to explore and reconcile the role of Complete Streets within the implementation of CSS.

### Training

In order for CSS to be implemented effectively by the Department, it is essential that the Department train personnel, consultants, and local agency partners in CSS. The Department has developed and is teaching three separate CSS training classes.

- The Department's CSS training manual was revised in 2007. Part of that revision included expanded information on multi-modal transportation.
- In 2007, one Local Agency class was held. During FY2008, the CSS Approach class will be opened up to local agency staff.
- During 2007, seven training classes were held for Department staff and consultants. Resource agency staff also began attending the Department's CSS training courses as part of a pilot project.

- In November, Department staff attended facilitation training to improve their meeting facilitation skills. Another facilitation class is scheduled for 2008.
- Outreach to the state's universities has continued with Department staff making a presentation to engineering students at Bradley University. A presentation before engineering students at the University of Illinois is scheduled for March 2008, as well.

During 2008, an emphasis on training will continue. The FY2008 training schedule is on the Department's CSS website. Currently, six classes are scheduled for 2008. Outreach to the universities and the resource agencies will continue and be expanded. A proposal has been approved for the development of an on-line CSS training class. Work has begun on this class, and it will be implemented during 2008.

### Communication

The focus for communication this year was the CSS webpage.

- The Department's CSS webpage has been updated and made more user-friendly.
- There have been 4,764 hits on this webpage during 2007.
- Receiving updates regarding Department CSS projects for inclusion on the webpage continue to be problematic.

During 2008, the focus will be on providing meaningful and timely information regarding Department CSS projects on the CSS webpage.

### Program Delivery

- A matrix has been developed for the tracking of the Department's CSS projects.
- Presentations regarding two major CSS projects were made at the annual OPP Fall Planning Conference.

Program Delivery will be the main CSS issue for focus in 2008. This will include tracking all Department CSS projects as well as providing the public with information regarding recent and currently underway CSS projects.

Implementation means the Department has advertised and begun awarding contracts for preliminary engineering studies specifically requiring the use of the CSS process. CSS principles already have been utilized in several important projects. Examples include the Prairie Parkway Study, the I-74 reconstruction project through Peoria, the South Lake Shore Drive reconstruction, the Dan Ryan and Kingery reconstruction, and the early phases of planning for the new Mississippi River bridge at East St. Louis.





These efforts during recent years have earned the Department local and national recognition. The American Council of Engineering Companies of Illinois awarded the Department the Eminent Conceptor Award for the removal and widening of the Murray Baker Bridge as part of the I-74 reconstruction project in Peoria. The American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) recognized the I-74 project in 2005 for excellence in community outreach.

The Federal Highway Administration also recognized IDOT for Excellence in Highway Design for the South Lake Shore Drive reconstruction project. The Institute of Transportation Engineers also recognized the South Lake Shore Drive project in part for its use of CSS principles. The City of Chicago and IDOT received the Transportation Achievement Award which recognizes significant and outstanding transportation achievements concerning safety improvements in transportation.

Finally, the Department's approach to implementation of CSS has received national recognition from AASHTO. As part of its annual CSS competition, AASHTO recognized the Department from among more than 60 applications and 31 states as a notable practice in CSS organizational integration for its balanced scorecard strategic management approach to CSS. The review panel members for this competition said IDOT "is developing a good set of tools, including changes to policies and procedures as well as training components that will help to instill CSS throughout the agency."

Further national attention was focused on the Department's CSS activities at the Transportation Research Board's 86th Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. in January, 2007. The Department's paper, "Context Sensitive Solutions Strategic Plan for the Illinois Department of Transportation" was selected for presentation at this meeting.

## MAJOR PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

*Major projects under way or completed in 2007 include:*

### Chicago-Area

#### • I-55: I-80 to Weber Road

This project involves the widening and resurfacing of I-55 in the center median area and constructing an additional third lane in each direction with a barrier wall. The construction of main drain sewer, signing, bridge improvements and noise wall are included with the proposed scope of work.

Twelve contracts totaling nearly \$115.5 million have been let to date on this project. The four mainline contracts were let in June at a total of nearly \$77.2 million. Completion is expected in fall of 2008.

• I-94 (Edens Expressway): Lawrence Avenue to Lake Cook Road (South and North Contracts) Cook County  
The I-94 (Edens Expressway) project from Lawrence Avenue to Lake Cook Road within Cook County involved nearly 14 miles of pavement patching, more than 4 inches of hot mix asphalt resurfacing, barrier wall repairs and minor drainage improvements at Foster Avenue, Pratt Avenue, Winnetka Road and Willow Road.

Six mainline bridges will be repaired, to include deck patching, bridge joint repairs and the placement of a concrete overlay. The bridge work involves I-94 (Edens Expressway) over Cicero Avenue, North Branch of the Chicago River, Forest Glen Avenue, Golf Road, Union Pacific Railroad and the Skokie River.

Two projects were let on Aug. 3, 2007 with a combined contract cost of more than \$41.6 million. The completion date for the south contract from Lawrence Avenue to Old Orchard Road is Sept. 30, 2008. The completion date for the north contract from Old Orchard Road to Lake Cook Road is Sept. 30, 2008.

#### • US 6 (159th Street), US 45 (LaGrange Road to 94th Avenue), Village of Orland Park, Cook County

The US 6 (159th Street) reconstruction project from US 45 (LaGrange Road) to 94th Avenue within the Village of Orland Park in Cook County involves improvements to a half-mile of US 6 (159th Street) and nearly a half mile of US 45 (LaGrange Road). The improvement includes widening and reconstruction of the roadway with jointed Portland cement concrete, construction of combination concrete curb and gutter, storm sewer installation, water main relocation, sidewalk construction, installation of highway lighting and the construction of a landscaped barrier median which includes trees and perennial plantings.

The following intersections will be modernized: US 6 (159th Street) at US 45 (LaGrange Road), US 6 (159th

Street) at 94th Avenue and US 45 (LaGrange Road) at 158th Place. The completion date for the project is Summer 2008.

#### • IL 68 at US 14, Village of Palatine and Inverness, Cook County

IL 68 over US 14 and the UP Railroad provides for the reconstruction of the bridge and the diamond interchange with mainline US 14. The UP Railroad runs parallel to US 14, and the contract includes the reconstruction of two closely spaced bridges carrying IL 68, along with traffic signals for ramp movements and reconstruction of the ramps.

This project let in March 2007 has a contract cost of more than \$11.6 million with completion scheduled for Summer 2008.



#### • Kingery Expressway

Reconstruction of the Kingery Expressway (I-80/94) was completed mid-summer 2007. The \$460 million Kingery Reconstruction Project included work on I-94 (Bishop Ford Expressway), IL 394, I-80/94 (Kingery Expressway in Illinois and Borman Expressway in Indiana), Torrence Avenue and various local frontage roads in South Holland and Lansing, Illinois and Munster and Hammond, Indiana. Numerous presentations were made to local businesses, local governments, media and community groups to keep the public informed of progress of the work. IDOT networked with the trucking industry across the country to keep them informed of expressway detours required to set curved girders over the expressway. Motorists were also informed of traffic impacts due to expressway detours by signs placed at rest areas, and through the IDOT website and press releases. IDOT received two awards from the American Council of Engineering Companies. In 2007, the IL 83 interchange at I-80/94 received the Illinois Honor Award for Engineering Excellence, and the entire Kingery project received the Engineering Excellence Award.



## • Elgin O'Hare – West Bypass Phase I Study

The federal SAFETEA-LU transportation legislation earmarked \$140 million in federal funds for the eastern extension of the Elgin O'Hare and a western bypass of O'Hare field. In June 2007, IDOT initiated the Phase I planning process, which includes preliminary engineering, environmental and public involvement activities. The Public Involvement program reflects the Department's Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) policy, a flexible and creative approach that encourages early, meaningful and frequent stakeholder input. The study team conducted stakeholder events in October, November and December, involving hundreds of participants such as elected officials, agencies, communities, interest groups and the general public. These events gathered input regarding transportation needs and this input will be used to develop rail, bus, highway, bike and pedestrian alternatives as the process moves forward.



## • Completion of Dan Ryan Expressway Reconstruction

This \$975 million project was completed in 2007, and involved the multi-year reconstruction of the Dan Ryan Expressway mainline travel lanes, including express lanes and local lanes, between 31st and 69th streets, mainline reconstruction from 71st Street south to I-57 and the addition of a lane in each direction. The work consisted of retaining walls, improved entrance and exit ramps, installation of new storm sewers to prevent flooding problems during heavy rains on the expressway, reconstruction of the three bridges, new 30-year life pavement for local lanes from 31st to 71st streets (Southbound and Northbound completed 15 days ahead of schedule), Southbound 71st Street to I-57 interchange-Mainline (completed 10 days ahead of schedule), Northbound I-57 to 71st Street-Mainline (completed five days ahead of schedule), bridge overlay with joint replacement (Southbound completed 15 days ahead of schedule), improved highway lighting and new Dynamic Message Signs for public information and safety. The Dan Ryan project was completed and safely opened for traffic ahead of schedule.

IDOT coordinated numerous community outreach efforts through public meetings, public hearings, legislative meetings, a telephone hotline, website updates, press releases and brochures alerting the community of traffic alerts. IDOT has pushed to increase the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise participation goal (the main contractor received an award from the Illinois Road Builders Association for the achievement of Equal Employment Opportunity Utilization-47 percent). IDOT received an award from the American Society of Civil Engineers for the Outstanding Civil Engineering Achievement of the Year over \$5 Million.

## Northern Illinois

### • US 20 Freeport Bypass (IL 26 to Springfield Rd, Freeport)

In 2007 the Freeport Bypass project was completed to provide a continuous four-lane access-controlled facility around the north side of Freeport. The total cost of this project was \$23 million. At 6.3 miles, this IL 26 to Springfield Road section represents most of the bypass length, as well as the initial construction leg of the overall US 20 Freeport to Galena initiative. A new interchange at IL 75 and a major Pecatonica River bridge crossing are among the project's key elements.

### • Milan Beltway Extension

The \$50 million project to build a new bridge over the Rock River to connect Milan with Moline/Rock Island was finished and the new river crossing was opened in June 2007. This project provides greater access to developing John Deere Road and nearby medical facilities, and provides a better link between Illinois Quad City communities.

### • IL 173/I-90 Interchange

This \$19 million contract was let in early 2006 and was opened to traffic in July 2007. This project resolves the traffic and capacity deficiencies prompted by rapid growth and development within the area. This provides an additional National Highway System (NHS) interconnection and improves public access to metro commuter rail in Harvard.

### • Prairie Parkway Study

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement was presented at public hearings in December 2006 and February 2007. In June 2007, a Preferred Alternative was selected consisting of the B5 Freeway connecting I-80 and I-88 and widening IL 47 from I-80 to Caton Farm Road. In July 2007, public hearings were held to present the revised Corridor Protection, proposed road closures, and to discuss the project's impacts on new federal air quality requirements. In November 2007, the revised Corridor Protection was approved, reflecting the Preferred Alternative B5 Freeway. To date, IDOT has held more than 200 meetings with the general public, landowners, elected officials, governmental staff and interest groups as part of the project's CSS effort.



- **I-39 Abraham Lincoln Bridge**

The deterioration of the bridge deck of the Abraham Lincoln Bridge over the Illinois River necessitated the fast-track preparation of plans and specifications completed in one year. The project was awarded in November 2006 construction letting and was more than 50 percent complete at the end of 2007. Construction is expected to be complete by November 2008.

## Central Illinois

With the completion of the upgrade I-74 reconstruction project in Fall 2006, the following awards were presented to IDOT in 2007:

- **IL 336 Expansion from Carthage to Macomb**

The final two contracts in District Four are well under way and the four-lane roadway will be open from Quincy to Macomb by the end of 2008. This is a major four-lane expansion of IL 336 that has been coordinated across two districts. It will be instrumental in bringing economic development and opportunity to west central Illinois.

- **2.0 – 6.5 Miles East of Carthage**

Construction for this 4.5-mile section of the Quincy to Macomb corridor is 60 percent complete. This \$24.5-million project is expected to be complete in late 2008.

- **6.5 Miles East of Carthage to 0.8 Miles West of the McDonough/Hancock County Line**

Construction for this 4.4-mile section of the Quincy to Macomb corridor is 35 percent complete. This \$26.4-million project is expected to be complete in late 2008.

- **IL 40 Expansion from IL 6 to Hickory Grove Road**

This project widened IL 40 from a two-lane to a five-lane highway to better serve this high growth area in Peoria. The contractor expedited their work and essentially completed this anticipated two-year project during just the 2007 construction year.

- **Peoria to Macomb Highway Study**

This study for the location and associated environmental work for a further extension of IL 336 continued throughout 2007. Preliminary preferred alignment of the highway was unveiled during three public information meetings held in 2007. A final public hearing is scheduled for Spring 2008 with a Record of Decision from the FHWA anticipated by the end of 2008.

- **IL 29 from IL 6 to I-180 Study**

A final public hearing was completed this year for the four-lane expansion of IL 29 from Peoria north to I-180. The final environmental impact statement and design reports are being prepared and should be completed with a Record of Decision from the FHWA in 2008. This project will increase traffic safety and enhance economic development along this 35-mile corridor, providing a new four-lane connection between Peoria and I-80 in northern Illinois.

- **US 136 (East Main Street) in Danville**

The second of two sections of the US 136 project was completed in 2007. This project is from IL 1 to Buchanan Street. The work consisted of reconstruction and widening of 2.2 miles of existing pavement to provide a four-lane

roadway with a bi-directional center turn lane. The projects included railroad crossing improvements and extensive right of way and utility relocations in the downtown area of Danville at a total cost of \$17 million.

- **I-57 at Curtis Road Southwest of Champaign**

This project entails construction of a new interchange with I-57 and 1.6 miles of four-lane connecting roadway between Staley Road and Duncan Road. This project includes extensive right of way and utility relocations, including relocation of a major natural gas pipeline serving the University of Illinois, Champaign campus. The majority of the work has been completed, and the interchange is scheduled to open in Spring 2008.



- **US 136/IL 336 Four-Lane Expressway South of Carthage to West of the McDonough/Hancock County Line**

The ongoing quest for economic development and economic opportunity in west-central Illinois has been the driving force behind the progress of IL 336. The Quincy to Macomb corridor will be complete by the end of 2008.

- **US 67 Four-Lane Expressway - Morgan and Scott Counties**

Economic development and opportunity in west central Illinois also has been the driving force behind the 229-mile improvement of US 67 from I-270 south of Alton to I-280 at Rock Island. A consultant was selected in March 2007 to provide a CSS study from 1.1 miles north to 0.5 mile south of the Illinois River (Illinois River Bridge), funded at \$160,000 in FY 2007 and \$240,000 in FY 2008. In addition, the consultant will prepare contract plans including the Type, Size, and Location bridge and roadway plans for the project limits.

- **US 51 Four-Lane Expressway - Moweaqua to Pana in Christian County**

A 3.9-mile section of U.S. 51 from south of Moweaqua to north of Assumption opened to traffic in September 2007. The contract was awarded in August 2005 at a cost

of \$14.3 million. Engineering and land acquisition efforts continue from north of Assumption to south of Pana.

- **I-72 at Macarthur Boulevard**

Construction is under way for the extension of Macarthur Boulevard in Springfield from the North Street/Junction Circle intersection to approximately a half mile south of I-72. Included is a new diamond interchange on I-72, 1.5 miles west of the I-55/Sixth Street interchange in Springfield. This contract totaling nearly \$22.5 million was awarded in March 2007. By December 2007 the project was 40 percent complete.

## South-Central Illinois

- **US 45 in Clay County**

These widening and resurfacing projects include horizontal and vertical realignments in addition to widening and resurfacing of several miles of US 45 from the north city limits of Louisville to Bible Grove Road. The cost of these projects is \$12.9 million.

- **IL 32/33 from the IL 32/33 Junction to Ford Avenue in Effingham**

These projects include a roadway widening from two lanes to five lanes with major intersection reconstructions at the IL 32/33 junction and the Ford Avenue intersection. The cost of these projects is \$15 million.

- **I-57 Interchange in Coles County**

These local agency projects include a new interchange on I-57 north of Mattoon and the overpass of US 45 with a new connection from US 45 to I-57. The project was designed to provide access to an industrial area to improve traffic capacity and promote economic development. The cost of the two projects to date is \$18.8 million. There are three remaining projects to connect the new interchange to the industrial area on IL 130 north of Charleston.

- **IL 33 from Effingham to Dieterich**

This project includes widening and resurfacing along with bridge rehabilitations and replacements along a 10-mile section of IL 33 from Effingham through Dieterich to the Jasper county line. The cost of the project is \$11.4 million and with another section planned from the Jasper/Effingham county line to Newton.

- **Wabash River Bridge at Mt. Carmel on IL 15 - Indiana Route 64**

This project consists of a new bridge and a small alignment change to more safely and effectively connect Illinois and Indiana in the Mt. Carmel and Princeton area. This structure is to replace the existing aged structure that is the only river crossing for several miles in each direction. The project is designed to improve traffic capacity and safety, as well as promote economic development in the area. The bridge contract is \$30.6 million.



## Southwestern Illinois

- **New Mississippi River Bridge at St. Louis**

The new Mississippi River Bridge project consists of a new bridge and several roadway and interchange improvements connecting Illinois and Missouri north of downtown St. Louis. Additional river crossing capacity is needed to provide for the area's projected growth. The project is designed to reduce congestion, improve traffic capacity, enhance highway safety, promote economic development and improve national security.

- **McKinley Bridge, Venice**

This project is a \$44.5 million reconstruction and rehabilitation of the McKinley Bridge across the Mississippi River in Venice. The structure was closed in October 2001 due to advanced deterioration. After extensive rehabilitation, the bridge was opened in December 2007. Opening the McKinley Bridge re-establishes an important option for commuter traffic traveling between Illinois and Missouri. It also promotes economic development for the north side of St. Louis and the industrial areas of Venice, Brooklyn and Madison County in Illinois.

- **I-64, IL 157 to O'Fallon**

This \$55.8 million project provides for additional lanes to alleviate congestion by continuing expansion to a six-lane section from IL 157 to O'Fallon. All lanes were open to traffic in August 2007.



- **I-70/I-55 to 2.5 miles East of I-55/270/70 Interchange**

This \$5.6 million project, completed in 2007, consisted of resurfacing, new bridge deck, bridge repairs and scour mitigation.

- **I-55/64/70 - US 40 - Poplar Street Bridge to IL 203**

The \$2.1 million resurfacing of this major artery in the Metro East Area was accomplished with minimal disruptions to traffic. Construction was completed in August 2007.



## Southern Illinois

- **New Interchange I-57/64 at Veterans Memorial Drive in Mt. Vernon**

This \$15.6 million project was awarded in September 2007 and is under construction. The new access point to I-57/64 and the overpass will greatly improve access to several regional trucking and distribution facilities. It will promote economic development by connecting the fast growing area west of the interstate to the rest of Mt. Vernon, including facilities for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists.

- **IL 13 Connector in Harrisburg**

This \$5-million four-lane urban improvement from Granger Street to US 45 in Harrisburg was awarded in January 2007 and construction is nearing completion.

- **IL 13, 6-Lane Expansion in Williamson County**

The scope of work includes adding a third through lane to IL 13, major reconstruction of existing intersections and frontage roads. An open house public meeting and corridor protection hearing was held in October 2007. The Phase I study will be completed in spring 2008.

- **I-57 Over New IL 13 in Marion**

The scope of work includes bridge replacement, ramp modifications, center median barrier protections on I-57 and auxiliary lanes. Plan development is under way and preliminary land acquisition activities have begun. The cost for this project is expected to be approximately \$30 million.

- **I-57, Marion to Williamson County Line**

This \$8 million re-surfacing project was completed in 2007. The project was developed to minimize traffic disruptions during peak holiday traffic periods. The impacts were minimized, and the project was completed on time.

- **IL 13 in Carbondale**

The \$4.9 million expansion of IL 13 on the western edge of Carbondale included widening the section from New Era Road to Old Main Street to provide a five-lane urban section. This included replacement of the Crab Orchard Creek structure, storm sewer installation, sidewalks and intersection improvements within the corridor.

## IDOT Uses Information from Health Experts to Devise State-of-the-Art Environmental Approach

IDOT blazed new trails toward improved stakeholder involvement and satisfaction with a dramatic shift in environmental policies governing urban freeway construction, starting with the Dan Ryan Expressway construction project.

IDOT implemented several innovative changes in its environmental policies to reduce the air pollution effects of highway construction, in coordination with other federal and state agencies such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH). The IEPA called IDOT's strategy on the Dan Ryan the largest single clean-air construction project in the nation.

This landmark policy improvement for urban freeway projects began with the reconstruction of the Dan Ryan Expressway (I-90/I-94) in Chicago as IDOT enlisted the knowledge and professional skills of nearly two dozen public health and environmental experts in or close to the project area. The group recommended policy improvements on health and environmental services and information to the communities most directly affected by urban construction projects, including closer cooperation with federal and state environmental protection agencies to better serve those communities.

This environment and health focus group helped IDOT improve on several aspects of policy improvement and groundbreaking environmental initiatives, including:

- Air quality monitoring and reporting of air quality in the construction area: IDOT in conjunction with IEPA established monitors near the Dan Ryan construction site to regularly track levels of dust, particulate matter, and other pollutants to measure the effects of road construction on air quality, and to better mitigate or prevent construction activities that could worsen air quality.
- Contract provisions for dust control measures for particulate matter such as additional or continuous watering on site to minimize airborne dust coming from the project area.
- Tougher requirements on contractors to use ultra low-sulfur fuel for project construction equipment, or install emissions control devices on construction equipment.
- Stricter rules to limit equipment idling on the construction site.
- Proactive, timely and accurate communications to the area communities about air monitoring results and potential actions needed if results change significantly.

Many of these health and environmental solutions represented firsts nationally for urban construction projects, and have been recognized by the FHWA, USEPA and other environmental and health agencies. IDOT in 2005 received an award from Partners for Clean Air, a Chicago-centered coalition of agencies and organizations dedicated to improving air quality. Many of the requirements and lessons learned from the Dan Ryan project can and will be utilized in the planning, design and implementation of other urban construction projects in the Chicago area and throughout the state.

## Improved Regional Cooperation is Hallmark of IDOT Community-Based Outreach

In an effort to further expand on the practice of Context Sensitive Solutions, IDOT engaged the immediate communities impacted by the Dan Ryan and Kingery Expressway Projects, and expanded the approach locally and even across state borders.

The Dan Ryan and Kingery expressways are crucial to car and truck traffic throughout the Chicago area, which is why IDOT made a concerted effort to ensure that Indiana, Ohio, Michigan and Wisconsin were aware of the construction staging changes and the impact of those changes on drivers. Weekly e-mail updates were sent to these states as traffic situations such as accidents occurred, IDOT immediately made these states aware of the current situations. Some states elected to put up their own Dynamic Messaging System (DMS) boards warning drivers of potential slow downs. As they were produced, these states also posted IDOT posters and flyers in rest areas and weigh stations.

For the first time, IDOT also put its traffic staging changes on traffic information stations featured on XM Satellite Radio, which is relied upon and used by many truckers. This method of disseminating traffic and roadway information enabled IDOT to provide drivers with the most updated reports available. Trucking associations also received weekly staging changes via e-mail which were then distributed by the associations to their members.

## Mentor-Protégé Program Aims to Build Capacity of Small and Minority Contractors

IDOT in 2007 continued building its groundbreaking Mentor-Protégé Program, a public-private partnership designed to help build the capacity of small, minority-owned companies to succeed in business and to successfully compete for larger road construction projects.

The federally approved pilot program compensates mentor companies for administrative expenses associated with the effort and teams larger, experienced firms with contractors that are certified as a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) in Illinois.

The Blagojevich administration and IDOT, through its Office of Business and Workforce Diversity have moved aggressively to break down barriers that typically prevent or hinder small and minority contractors from succeeding in the road construction field. IDOT raised the bar on its target for inclusion, increasing its statewide goal for the percentage of contracts going to DBEs from 12 percent in 2003 to the current goal of 22.7 percent.

In addition, IDOT has upgraded and expanded the supportive services it offers to DBEs to enable them to compete for contracts. Under this administration, IDOT opened walk-in DBE Resource Centers connected with major transportation projects in Chicago and East St. Louis. Previously, contractors seeking assistance had to travel to Springfield.

Under the new program, once a mentor firm and protégé are teamed up, they will jointly establish a development plan that outlines their goals and expectations, sets benchmarks and creates a monitoring and reporting mechanism that will be used to judge the effectiveness of the effort.

The plan may include training in the following areas: business planning, recordkeeping, technical assistance and use of equipment, capital formation, loan packaging, financial counseling and bonding.

The mentor and protégé will work together toward a goal of winning contracts for the protégé, and the two contractors will have the option of forming joint ventures to bid on projects.

To qualify for the program, the mentor firm must have at least five years' experience as an IDOT contractor and the protégé firm must have at least three years highway construction experience and must also be certified as a DBE through the Illinois Unified Certification Program.

Progress in the program will be overseen by IDOT's Mentor-Protégé Oversight Committee.

The new program has been approved by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration as a pilot project through 2010. It is offered in four IDOT Districts around the state, including D-1 in the Chicago area, D-4 based in Peoria, D-6 based in Springfield, and D-8 based in Collinsville.

## IDOT At A Glance

### How to Learn More About Mentor-Protégé Program

For more information, interested parties should go to the IDOT Web site at:

[www.dot.state.il.us/obwd/mentor.html](http://www.dot.state.il.us/obwd/mentor.html)



## Safest Year on Illinois Roads Since 1924

Motorists enjoyed the the safest year on Illinois roadways in more than 80 years during 2007, as traffic fatalities dropped below 1,250 for the first time since 1924. Some 200 fewer people were killed on Illinois highways during each of the years 2006 and 2007 than in 2003, when the statewide Primary Seatbelt Law was passed. Since 2003, safety belt usage among Illinois drivers has increased from 76 percent to more than 90 percent in 2007, the highest usage rate in Illinois history.

"We had one primary goal in mind when we signed a law giving police the power to pull drivers over for not wearing safety belts – saving lives. Now, less than five years later, we have recorded the fewest fatalities on Illinois roadways since 1924, for the second straight year. These numbers represent clear and convincing evidence to us that the law is working and seat belts really do save lives," said Gov. Rod R. Blagojevich, who signed the seatbelt enforcement law in 2003.

A total of 1,249 traffic deaths occurred on Illinois roadways in 2007, the lowest total since 1,065 deaths were recorded in 1924. Traffic fatalities in 2003 totaled 1,454 and have decreased in every year since.

"In addition to promoting increased safety belt usage, we're working closely with the Illinois State Police and local agencies for increased enforcement and motorist education," said Milton R. Sees, Illinois Secretary of Transportation. "Gov. Blagojevich challenged us to try new things aimed at saving lives and we have implemented the state's first Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan, we've added a new Motorcycle Enforcement Bureau, we've increased emphasis on highway safety engineering, and we have established photo radar and other aggressive enforcement initiatives and public information campaigns to get motorists to buckle up, slow down and not drive impaired."



The Illinois State Police has aggressively been targeting what are known as the “Fatal Five” violations in an effort to reduce highway fatalities. The “Fatal Five” include: speeding, safety belts, improper lane usage, following too closely and driving under the influence.

“We know that through aggressive enforcement of the Fatal Five we are saving lives,” said Illinois State Police Director Larry Trent. “It’s unfortunate that the threat of receiving a traffic ticket appears to provide a strong deterrent to these types of violations. We’d much rather see citizens comply for the mere fact that it saves lives. The ISP will, however, continue to do whatever it takes to keep our citizens safe.”

## IDOT At A Glance

### Additional Traffic Safety

#### Measures Designed to Save Lives

Additional traffic safety measures signed into law by Governor Blagojevich do the following:

- Double the amount of time a teen must have behind the wheel before receiving their license;
- Ban teen drivers from carrying more than one passenger for the first six months after receiving his or her license;
- Ban cell phone use while driving by those under 18;
- Require drivers under 18 to make sure that their teen passengers are buckled properly in the front and back seats;
- Raise the age that children must be in booster seats from 4 to 8.
- Increase penalties for drivers over age 21 who transport a child under age 16, while impaired;
- Require chemical testing for those arrested for hit-and-run;
- Enable harsher sentencing for causing a death while driving impaired;
- Enact tougher penalties for driving on a DUI-revoked license; and
- Allow for expanded use of DUI funds by local agencies.

### Additional Measures to Deter Impaired Driving

Additional anti-impaired-driving measures signed by Governor Blagojevich include:

- Harsher penalties for repeat DUI offenders, includes making it a felony offense if convicted of DUI three or more times, with no probation for a fourth or fifth conviction;
- Chemical testing required for those arrested for hit-and-run;
- Harsher sentencing for causing a death while driving impaired;
- Tougher penalties for driving on a DUI-revoked license.
- Creation of the Illinois Alcohol Abuse Task Force, to present recommendations on improved coordination of the alcohol abuse, prevention and enforce-

ment efforts by state agencies and organization, improved information sharing, and improved use of state resources.

## How IDOT Vehicle Inspection Units Make Roads Safer

The addition of 10 new commercial vehicle safety compliance auditors and an aggressive inspection/audit program helped to reduce the number of truck fatalities in 2006.

Each year, this unit conducts:

- 8,000 safety audits;
- 1,500 commercial truck inspections;
- 5,000 school bus unscheduled inspections each year.

## IDOT Overhauls Communications and Education to Reduce Traffic Congestion

Chicago holds the dubious title of being the second most congested city in the nation. U.S. Department of Transportation studies show that commuters nationwide spend more than 100 hours per year traveling to work... more than the average two weeks of vacation time. Equally important, nearly 43 percent of our nation’s energy resources go into transportation – adding to our dependence on foreign oil.

In light of this, IDOT is working hard to identify practical and economical solutions to this problem. One such solution is a combined effort led by IDOT, working with transportation service boards and the Illinois Tollway Authority, to promote the use of public transportation through a creative marketing campaign theme: Drive Less. Live More.

This campaign urges drivers to try public transportation and encourages the benefits – such as being able to read the morning newspaper on the train, or making it home in time for dinner because the commuter is not stuck in traffic. Features of this campaign include a website with a gas calculator, along with radio advertising and informational brochures.

IDOT also has launched what is dubbed the “arterial DMS project”. By placing dynamic message system (DMS) signs approximately one mile ahead of typically congested highway entrances, commuters are able to choose their commuting routes based on posted, up-to-the-minute travel times along with suggested alternate routes. Seven of these boards are to be installed permanently by Summer 2007.

In 2006, IDOT also launched [www.GettingAroundIllinois.com](http://www.GettingAroundIllinois.com) and [www.ILTrafficAlert.com](http://www.ILTrafficAlert.com). Both of these services are free to users and enable viewers to obtain up-to-the-minute information on traffic conditions,

roadway and weather conditions and many other travel aids. GettingAroundIllinois features a customized travel program. Users can simply type in starting and ending points for their planned travel route, as well as destinations one would like to see along the way (such as restaurants, museums or other businesses) and a customized itinerary is presented. This helpful site also contains real time information about road conditions, road construction and where to find E-85 stations.

IDOT's new [www.ILTrafficAlerts.com](http://www.ILTrafficAlerts.com) site allows Chicago area travelers to receive customized e-mail alerts based on the routes and time of day the commuter selects in registering for the service. Working in conjunction with the Illinois Tollway Authority, this program covers more than 70 Chicago-area highways

## IDOT At A Glance

### Congestion Mitigation in NE IL

To provide innovative and cost-effective ways to reduce congestion in the 6-county Chicago area, IDOT has developed a number of new initiatives including:

- Arterial Dynamic Message System Electronic Information Signs, [www.GettingAroundIllinois.com](http://www.GettingAroundIllinois.com) with complete travel information online
- Customized daily e-mail alerts free of charge to registered users
- A unified congestion reduction public information campaign known as "Drive Less. Live More," to encourage the use of public transportation options
- [www.ILTrafficAlerts.com](http://www.ILTrafficAlerts.com) – an Internet site that offers users one-stop shopping for their transit needs, including features such as a gas calculator, step calculator and more.

## Traffic Alerts Help Drivers Avoid Urban-Area Congestion

Chicago-area commuters can now do more to avoid traffic jams and congestion long before they leave the house, if they sign up for free, real-time traffic alerts available now from IDOT.

"No one likes being stuck in traffic, and no one wants to spend time stuck in congestion when they could be home with their family or doing something else they enjoy," Gov. Rod R. Blagojevich said in announcing the initiative. "Thanks to new technology, we can help drivers avoid that kind of frustration. Our new traffic alert system means drivers can get up-to-the-minute information about congested areas and travel times, which can help avoid delays and get them where they're going with fewer delays."

The new system – at [www.iltrafficalert.com](http://www.iltrafficalert.com) – enables people to register for customized e-mail traffic alerts providing expected travel times, vehicle speeds, construction work, congestion and incident information about more than 70 route segments on Chicago area expressways and suburban tollways via e-mail, cell phone text messaging, or other mobile devices. Additional segments will be added as construction projects are completed. The system was launched in the Chicago area as part of IDOT's ongoing congestion reduction effort.

The e-mail alert system was developed in conjunction with the University of Illinois-Chicago (UIC) Department of Computer Science. The system can register up to 1,000 new users every 15 minutes.







IDOT welcomes e-mail alert users, but cautions against compromising traveler safety and urges drivers not to access the system on hand-held devices while driving. “We want this new system to help commuters avoid congestion, not to contribute to crashes,” said IDOT Secretary Milton R. Sees. “That’s why when signing up for the alerts, set the time of day for before you are scheduled to hit the road. We want drivers who are behind the wheel to stay focused on their driving.”

George Billows, executive director of the Illinois Trucking Association (ITA), described the new system as “easy and user friendly.”

“I am confident that many ITA members will use this site on a regular basis,” Billows said. “The selection of road segments, times, days of the week, etc., was excellent. Drivers with e-mail via phone or blackberry, on-board computers and certainly dispatchers will be able to make their selections to fit their operational needs.”

The new e-mail alert systems follow the launch of [www.GettingAroundIllinois.com](http://www.GettingAroundIllinois.com), a separate website that provides information about winter road conditions, construction activity and average daily traffic counts. The site also allows users to map travel destinations, such as hotels, restaurants, gas stations, airports, tourist attractions, museums, hospitals, schools and government agencies.

Other congestion relief efforts on the state’s roadways include the Governor’s \$5.3 billion Congestion-Relief Program on the Illinois Tollway system, called Open Roads for a Faster Future, intended to reduce travel times by rebuilding and restoring 90 percent of the system, widening or adding lanes to many miles of existing roads, converting 20 mainline toll plazas to barrier-free Open Road Tolling, and extending I-355 south to I-80 in Will County. Open Road Tolling lanes are now available at 17 Tollway plazas.

## IDOT At A Glance

**How E-Mail Alert Registration Works at [www.iltrafficalert.com](http://www.iltrafficalert.com)**

When people register for e-mail alert services, they are asked to:

1. Choose the segments of roadways they want to be alerted about.
2. Select the one or two times of day when they want to receive alerts.
3. Select the days of the week when they want to receive alerts.
4. Select whether they want to customize alerts to receive them only if the average speed on the road is below a certain threshold.
5. Select the type of data they want to receive: incidents, construction, congestion reports and/or travel times.